

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 6-30 are pending in this application, of which Claims 1, 9, 18, 19, 25, 29 and 30 are in independent form. Claim 5 has been canceled, and its recitations incorporated into independent Claims 1, 18, 19 and 29; these actions are taken without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 25 and 30 have been amended to include recitations taken from allowed Claim 9, to define still more clearly what Applicant regards as his invention.

Applicant notes with appreciation the allowance of Claims 9-17.

Applicant also notes with appreciation the Examiner's indication that Claim 28 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, with no change in scope. Since for the reasons given below its base claim is believed to be allowable, Claim 28 has not been so rewritten.

Claims 1, 13, 18, 19, 25, 29 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from U.S. Patent 6,094,218 (Suzuki et al.) in view of U.S. Patent 6,671,394 (Sako); Claims 2, 4-8, 20, 21, 25 and 27 were rejected as being obvious from *Suzuki* and *Sako* in view of U.S. Patent 5,995,201 (Sakaguchi), and Claims 22-24, as being obvious from *Suzuki* and *Sako* in view of U.S. Patent 5,404,853 (Miyaza).

As noted above, independent Claim 1 now includes the recitations of Claim 5 (and therefore is identical in scope to Claim 5 as presented in Applicant's last Amendment). Thus, Claim 1 is directed to an image processing apparatus that comprises image obtaining means for obtaining a second image of a predetermined aspect size ratio from a first image on the basis of an aspect size ratio of the first image, and reducing means for reducing the second image obtained by the image obtaining means. Also provided in

the apparatus are associating means for associating the second image reduced by the reducing means with the first image, and adding means for adding specific information to an arbitrary end section of the reduced image obtained by the reducing means. For an example of what is added by the adding means, the Examiner is referred to the marks 610 to be added to both right and left end sections of the thumbnail image of the image 601(2) shown in Fig. 7.<sup>1</sup>

From further careful study of the prior art and the Office Action, Applicant finds that he cannot agree that anything in the prior art would teach or suggest anything corresponding to the specific information added by the adding means of Claim 1.

To begin with, Applicant notes that the Office Action does not contend that that feature is taught or suggested by *Suzuki* and *Sako*, even taken in combination, and relies on *Sakaguchi* for the adding means.

*Sakaguchi* has been discussed in Applicant's previous Amendment, and it is not deemed necessary to repeat that discussion. Applicant notes that the cited portions of that patent (col. 16, lines 5-10, as well as col. 9, lines 20-30, and col. 10, lines 45-56) do not appear to teach or suggest the addition of any information to an image. In the cited portions of cols. 9 and 10, what is discussed is simply the ability of the *Sakaguchi* apparatus to be used in trimming any particular portion of a slide, and the means by which this can be done. Col. 16 concerns the ability of the *Sakaguchi* machine to perform negative-positive and positive-negative reversal processing if needed. None of this is seen to teach or suggest in any way the addition of specific information to an end portion of an

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<sup>1/</sup> It is of course to be understood that the claim scope is not limited by the details of any portion of the disclosure that may be referred to in this discussion.

image, much less means for performing such adding. Even if *Sakaguchi* is deemed to teach trimming a slide and matching the trimmed image with another image (and it is by no means clear that such processing is taught, certainly not by the portions of that patent specifically cited in the Office Action), it is not seen how that would teach or suggest adding information to an arbitrary end portion of an image, much less means for doing so, as recited in Claim 1.

Accordingly, it is believed that independent Claim 1 is clearly allowable over the cited combination of *Suzuki*, *Sako* and *Sakaguchi* (even assuming that any combination of any two or more of those documents would be a permissible one).

Independent Claims 18, 19 and 29 each recite the adding discussed above, or means for adding, and are each also deemed to be clearly allowable over *Suzuki*, *Sako* and *Sakaguchi* for the reasons discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

Moreover, as stated above, Applicant has amended independent Claims 25 and 30 to include recitations of the features of allowed Claim 9.

For example, independent Claim 25 is directed to an image processing method which can manage a plurality of images and display a list by using reduced images of the images, comprising a generating step, of, when a target image is an elongated image whose aspect ratio is larger than a predetermined value, generating a reduced image of the target image. According to Claim 25, the generating includes obtaining a second image from an arbitrary area portion of the target image and a third image from the other area portion of the target image on the basis of the aspect size ratio of the first image, by making reduction ratios in the vertical and lateral directions different in the arbitrary area portion and the other area portion of the target image, respectively. The second and third images

are synthesized to obtain the reduced image, and in a display step, the reduced image generated in the generating step is displayed. Also included in the method is an associating step, of associating the reduced image with the target image.

Claim 30 is a memory-medium claim corresponding to method Claim 25.

Accordingly, it is believed that Claims 25 and 30 are allowable for the same reasons as is Claim 9.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicant's opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or the other of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

This Amendment After Final Action is believed clearly to place this application in condition for allowance and its entry is therefore believed proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116. Entry of this Amendment After Final Action, as an earnest effort to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney in an effort to resolve such issues and advance the case to issue.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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